

# HURRICANE PREPARATION

The City of Alexandria is taking steps to assure the safety of everyone during potentially dangerous weather, and encourages residents to make preparations for their homes and families. On September 18, 2003, Alexandria suffered more than \$2 million in damage from Hurricane Isabel, so the impacts of a hurricane are well known.

Being prepared for any emergency requires planning. If you are able to stay at home, electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service and transportation could be disrupted or lost for some time. ***Emergency management planners suggest having food, water, medications and other essentials on hand to last your family for three to five days.***

Listening to the weather forecast, it is important to understand the meaning of watches and warnings.

- **HURRICANE WATCH**: Hurricane conditions are possible, usually within 36 hours.
- **HURRICANE WARNING**: Hurricane conditions are expected, usually within 24 hours.
- **SHORT TERM WATCHES AND WARNINGS**: provide detailed information on specific hurricane threats, such as tornadoes, floods, and high winds.

## *During a Watch...*

- Listen to radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins of the storm's progress.
- Updates about City services and programs will be posted on the City's web site [alexandriava.gov](http://alexandriava.gov) and sent to the media for broadcast.
- Fuel and service vehicles.
- Prepare to bring lawn furniture and other loose, lightweight objects inside.

## *During a Warning...*

- Closely monitor radio, TV, or NOAA Weather Radio for official bulletins.
- Follow instructions issued by local officials. Leave immediately if told to do so!
- Turn the refrigerator to maximum cold and open only when necessary.
- Fill bathtub and large containers with water for sanitary purposes.
- If winds become strong, stay away from windows and doors. Go to an interior first-floor room such as a bathroom or closet. Close all interior doors and brace external doors.

Among the lessons learned from Hurricane Isabel is that planning in advance for a hurricane will help us know what to do when the next hurricane strikes. Suggestions for preparation include:

- Meet with neighbors to plan how the neighborhood can work together.
- Identify the elderly and disabled who may need help with transportation and medical concerns.
- Keep a first aid kit, medications, eyeglasses and hearing aid batteries on hand.
- Teach children how to reach family members in case they become separated during a storm.
- Discuss how to dial emergency numbers and practicing escape routes from all rooms with your children. The emergency number for fire, police, and ambulance in Alexandria is 911.

For general information, call Citizens Assistance at 703.838.4800.



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